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## Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies: An Initiative of the American Folklore Society and Its Partners in China and the United States

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*Since 2007, the American Folklore Society has pursued a partnership project with the China Folklore Society. Diverse in activities and extensively participated in, the endeavor is known as the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. In this peer-reviewed report, one sub-project within this umbrella effort is reviewed. The Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project continued the project's established exchange practices and added a program of material culture and heritage studies research.*

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**Keywords:**

(from the AFS Ethnographic Thesaurus and Library of Congress subject headings), community museums, crafts, ethnic museums, ethnological museums, folk museums, intangible cultural heritage, international cooperation, open-air museums, Bai (Chinese people), Dong (Chinese people), Yao (Southeast Asian people)

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SINCE 2007, THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY (AFS) (Meiguo minsu xuehui) and the China Folklore Society (CFS) (Zhongguo minsu xuehui) have jointly pursued collaboration activities under the auspices of an umbrella project known as the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project.<sup>1</sup> This formal, multi-stage project was initiated during a period of informal relationship building and planning discussions (Ivey 2017; Lloyd 2017a, 2017b; Zhang and Song 2017). Since that time, and in three phases (2011–2013, 2013–2016, and 2017–2021), the project has included multiple sub-projects addressing different aspects of the field of folklore studies as pursued in the two countries and in relation to different dimensions of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) theory and practice relevant in the two national contexts and internationally. When the informal and formal phases of the umbrella project are taken into account together, the large multi-year, multi-phase project can be seen as being almost coterminous with the life and work of the Convention for the Safeguarding

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of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by UNESCO on October 17, 2003, and ratified by China on December 2, 2004 (UNESCO, n.d.). While the United States is not a “states party” to the ICH convention, it and its effects around the world have been a key concern to US-based folklorists throughout this period (cf. Noyes 2011; Foster and Gilman 2015; Baron 2016). For Chinese folklorists, public folklore practices found in the United States and discussed in the bi-national project have provided a useful comparative case (An 2004; Lloyd and You 2013; Kang, Baron, and Wang 2014; Yang 2015; Baron 2017; Huang 2020; Zhang Lijun 2021). In China, national policies shaped by the ICH convention (and the older UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972, adopted by China in 1985) have transformed the field of folklore studies (An and Yang 2015; Gao Bingzhong 2014; Zhang Lijun 2019b). Neighboring fields such as ethnology and museum studies have similarly been profoundly impacted by the scale and pervasiveness of ICH work in China (Ma and Zhu 2018; Zhao 2006). All of the sub-projects pursued under the umbrella project have taken account of these cultural heritage issues as they unfold differently in the United States and China, and of the larger questions raised by the global rise of ICH discourses, policies, practices, and critiques. These provided the wider contexts for the joint AFS-CFS efforts discussed here.<sup>2</sup>

Given its scale, duration, reach, and complexity, as well as the diversity and scope of its activities and outcomes, the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project is one of the most extensive and ambitious international partnership projects yet pursued by a network of scholarly societies and institutional partners and focused on ICH policy and practice. Building on earlier accounts of this work-in-progress, this article discusses the activities of one of the two most recent sub-projects undertaken within the larger umbrella project, the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project, which was pursued initially between 2017 and 2019, and which was then extended for the years 2020 and 2021 (Jackson 2021). As a major multi-year effort of the AFS, its major activities and outcomes are durably recorded and broadly shared here in the society’s flagship publication.

Through various sub-projects and special initiatives, the larger effort has resulted in seven major bi-national, bilingual forum (conference) events and a wide range of professional exchange activities pursued in both countries and impacting hundreds of Chinese and North American scholars and practitioners in folklore studies and closely related fields.<sup>3</sup> Through sub-projects separate from the museum-focused ones discussed here, the effort has also generated a range of best-practices workshops and the development of curriculum materials and research resources. Initiated with a pilot summer workshop in 2016 and continuing with the umbrella project’s third formal phase (2017–2019), four summer institutes brought together senior, emerging, and student scholars and practitioners from both nations for extended, informal discussions. Some of these workshops also included participants from the Folklore Society of Japan (*Nihon minzoku gakkai*).<sup>4</sup>

During the second phase of the umbrella project, a first museums-focused sub-project was initiated. This sub-project (2013–2016) was titled Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice. Its focus, structure, and outcomes will be discussed below as a prelude to reporting on the second museums-focused

sub-project that followed it (see also Dewhurst 2017; Dewhurst and Lloyd 2019). That second museums-focused sub-project (Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies), which built on the preceding one, is the main focus of this article. In collaboration with Wang Wei and Zhang Lijun, Jason Baird Jackson co-led this sub-project on behalf of the AFS. In companion research works (Wuerxiya et al. 2022; Zhang Lijun et al. 2022), the sub-project has also made legible a range of issues of broader concern to the field as practiced in both countries and internationally. These are touched upon lightly here in the concluding section.

Before considering the museum sub-projects in detail, two remaining contexts for the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project as a whole should be addressed. These are the issues of project funding and organizational leadership. The keystone funder of the project was the Henry Luce Foundation, a US-based philanthropy that has long made strategic investments aimed at fostering “scholarly and cultural exchange between the United States and Asia” (Henry Luce Foundation, n.d.). During the period of the formal umbrella project up to the time that this article was compiled (2007–2021), the Henry Luce Foundation made three major awards to the AFS to support these endeavors (2011, 2013, 2016).<sup>5</sup> Within the specific sub-projects, including the two phases of museums work (2013–2016 and 2016–2021), Luce support was a vital means by which additional funding and in-kind support from partner organizations and other supporters could be leveraged. For the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project, these additional funders and sources of support are noted below in the Acknowledgments section. The broader pattern is one in which a diverse range of supporters invested vital resources to support the project efforts, with the three major Luce awards serving as an invaluable catalyst.<sup>6</sup>

The Presidents of the AFS and the CFS, together with the Executive Directors of the AFS, have been central to the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project as a whole. Timothy Lloyd served as AFS Executive Director from the informal beginnings of the project through his retirement in 2018. Throughout this period, he was a key architect of, and project manager for, the bi-national effort as a whole (Lloyd 2017a, 2017b). He was also the lead author for the three funding requests made to the Luce Foundation. Since 2018, Lloyd has served AFS as Senior Advisor for Partnerships, and in this role, he consults with AFS leaders on this and other major partnership projects. Beginning in 2018, Jessica Anderson Turner became the AFS Executive Director, and she has assumed project management responsibilities for the United States side of the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. In her work with the project, she fortuitously brought her own experience as a researcher focused on folklore and heritage studies issues in China (Turner 2010; Yang, An, and Turner 2005). The CFS structure does not correspond exactly to the AFS one. Presidents, and associated Councils, serve for longer periods and work cooperatively with a Secretary-General. The CFS President at the beginning of formal cooperation projects with AFS was Liu Kuili (1999–2010) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. During most of the period of the two museum sub-projects discussed here, Chao Gejin of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences served as CFS President (2010–2018). Ye Tao was also affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

at the time of his appointment as CFS President in 2018. He had previously served as CFS Secretary-General. These CFS leaders have all worked closely with a series of active AFS presidents, Lloyd, and Turner on the broader project.<sup>7</sup>

### *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice (2013–2016): A Summary*

In keeping with norms for international cooperation projects in folklore studies and museum ethnography (Dewhurst and MacDowell 2015), and in accord with the broader project framework, the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice sub-project was co-led by a US-based scholar-practitioner and a China-based one. For the United States side of the sub-project, C. Kurt Dewhurst of Michigan State University (MSU) and the MSU Museum (Mixigen zhouli daxue bowuguan) served in this role, with Xie Mohua, who was then serving as Director of the Yunnan Nationalities Museum (Yunnan minzu bowuguan), serving as co-leader on behalf of the Chinese partners. Dewhurst and Xie first became acquainted in the context of planning for the *Mekong River: Connecting Cultures* program for the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival (Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage 2007; Sebold 2007; Xie 2017; Dewhurst 2017). They deepened their relationship when the exhibition *The Sum of Many Parts: 25 Quiltmakers in 21st-Century America* was presented at the Yunnan Nationalities Museum, having been organized in a partnership between the MSU Museum, Arts Midwest, and South Arts (Dewhurst and Lloyd 2019:60; Hollingsworth and Malone 2012; MacDowell and Worrall 2012). As the AFS-CFS effort moved from informal discussions to formal planning, Dewhurst and Xie began conceptualizing a museums-focused sub-project that would provide opportunities to explore the work of folklore studies and ICH theory and practice in museum contexts in both countries. Although the sub-project was originally conceived to begin during the first formal phase of the larger project (2011–2013), Luce Foundation staff urged AFS and CFS to begin with fewer concurrent sub-projects; thus, in the first formal period, emphasis was placed on the “Forums on China-US Folklore and ICH” series (that is, on the sub-project focused on convening bi-national conferences) and on the work of hosting international exchange activities that would bring early-career Chinese scholars, practitioners, and students to the United States, and emerging US-based scholars, practitioners, and students to China, for opportunities to learn about the work of the discipline in the respective host countries. The curriculum and resources-focused sub-project, and the museums-focused one, were shifted to a then-anticipated second phase of work, and this is how matters came to be realized, with the first museums sub-project securing funding in early 2013 through a second award from the Henry Luce Foundation.<sup>8</sup>

Representing, and thereby including, their own home museums—the Michigan State University Museum and the Yunnan Nationalities Museum—the provisional co-leaders recruited four additional project partner museums during late 2012. Drawing on his knowledge of the field in the United States, Dewhurst recruited the Museum of International Folk Art (Guoji minjian yishu bowuguan) (then led by Marsha Bol) and Indiana University’s (IU) Mathers Museum of World Cultures (Masesi shijie wenhua

bowuguan) (then soon-to-be led by Jason Baird Jackson). Similarly, Xie invited the other two major provincial nationalities museums of Southwest China to join the project.<sup>9</sup> This added the Guizhou Nationalities Museum (Guizhou minzu bowuguan) (then led by Gao Cong) and the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities (Guangxi minzu bowuguan) (then led by Wang Wei).<sup>10</sup>

Like most activities undertaken in the larger project, the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice sub-project achieved its original goals while going beyond them and generating outcomes that were valuable but unforeseen. The formal goals of the sub-project are detailed below.

The sub-project would (and did) produce two forum events. These (the fifth and sixth overall) would have a museum-specific focus. Hosted by the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the United States, the fifth forum focused on the question of how tangible heritage (long the focus of museums in the form of collections objects) can be integrated with the forms of cultural knowledge that, in the wake of the UNESCO ICH convention, are increasingly reframed as ICH rather than as folklore, cultural knowledge, or ethnographic context (Bol et al. 2014). The sixth forum, hosted in Guiyang, Guizhou, China, by the Guizhou Cultural Palace of Nationalities (Guizhou minzu wenhuangong) and its Guizhou Nationalities Museum, was a general forum on contemporary research and professional practice related to ICH and museums (Gao Cong 2015). In both Santa Fe and Guiyang, conferees participated not only in formal presentation sessions but also in field trips aimed at connecting attendees with regional culture and regional ICH initiatives. As discussed below, both forums included companion professional exchange opportunities.

As a proof-of-concept exercise and to build mutual experience with ethnographic museum practice in the two nations, it was expected that the partners would pursue a museum exhibition together. This resulted in the production of what turned out to be an elaborate and successful touring exhibition known in the United States as *Quilts of Southwest China* (Zhongguo xinan pinbu) and in China as *Quilting Art and Tradition—People, Handcrafts and Community Life* (Pinbu yishu yu chuantong—ren, wu, shenghuo). Supplemented by a major catalogue published in English and Chinese and by a rich array of public programs at each venue, this exhibition was co-curated by Marsha MacDowell and Zhang Lijun (MacDowell and Zhang Lijun 2016; MacDowell 2017; Zhang Lijun 2017). The 2,000 square-foot (186 square-meter) exhibition included new research with quiltmakers undertaken in China by partner museums and presented works from several of the participating museum partners.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the forum and exhibition, and staged in conjunction with the forum events in China and in the United States and with successive exhibition opening events in the United States, the third major element of the sub-project was professional exchange opportunities. During this sub-project, these exchange experiences focused on emerging leaders within the partner museums. Whereas most forum delegates only traveled to participate in these gatherings, exchange participants stayed in-country afterward visiting the respective US or Chinese partner museums who hosted them locally for cultural emersion and ICH- or public folklore-relevant experiences. These exchange activities involved connecting with, and mutual learning with, very large numbers of museum professionals, folklorists, artists/craftspeople, and community activists and cultural workers. While not anticipated initially, exhibition opening



events—and new funding raised in connection with exhibition implementation and programming—provided additional opportunities for bi-national professional exchange through the conclusion of the United States tour in 2018.

Beyond these core activities, the museums sub-project achieved an extensive range of unanticipated outcomes during 2013–2016. Only a few of these can be mentioned here. As Dewhurst and Lloyd note, this period of work fostered unanticipated engagement with, and knowledge sharing related to, extant museum collections at the six core partner museums (Dewhurst and Lloyd 2019:62). The sub-project also created opportunities for assembling new collections for each of these museums. One of these new collections in turn provided the basis for the exhibition *Putting Baskets to Work in Southwest China* that was organized by, and presented at, the Mathers Museum of World Culture in 2015. An expanded version of this exhibition was then presented in 2018 at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

On top of the anticipated *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition and the unanticipated basketry exhibition, the work of the partners also led to the exhibition *Walking in Love* at the Michigan State University Museum in 2016, to the exhibition *Baina—Zhuangzu pinbu beimian yishu zhan* (*Zhuang Patchwork Art*) at the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities in 2017, and to the exhibition *Beijing's 798 Art Zone*, staged at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures in 2017.<sup>12</sup> What had been originally imagined as one exhibition (*Quilts*) appearing at the three United States partner museums bloomed to become five exhibitions appearing at nine museums across the United States and China.

Complementing the add-on exhibitions, collections study, and collections-building activities, the sub-project during this period also generated unexpected publications as well as a surprising number of conference events and conference invitations arising from person-to-person relationships fostered during sub-project gatherings and in the course of cooperative exhibition work. As intended, the extensive opportunities that these activities—planned and emergent—provided for professional communication led to strong networks. They also greatly enriched mutual understanding of the nature of ethnographic and ICH-focused museum work in the two countries and of the status, priorities, and working concepts of folklore studies as a discipline and museums as a realm of professional practice (Dewhurst and Lloyd 2019:62). As Lloyd noted in an interim reflection on the larger project:

This project is not about Chinese folklore or American folklore *per se*; it is about connecting the fields of folklore studies in China and the United States. AFS's primary focus in these activities has been on engaging our general membership with counterparts in China who share similar research interests; for example, of the more than 60 US folklorists who have been involved in our 2011–17 activities, only nine are China specialists. (Approximately 150 Chinese folklorists have participated in our 2011–2017 activities; very few of them are Americanists.) (Lloyd 2017b:3)

While the numbers of participants in project and sub-project activities have continued to climb, these same dynamics have continued up to the end of 2021 when this article was finalized. Opportunities for relationship building and for the accumulation of mutual understanding during 2013–2016 provided the basis for formulating

the next phase of work, the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project.

### *Planning for the New Sub-Project, 2015–2016*

From May 14 to May 21, 2015, the Mathers Museum of World Cultures hosted an international symposium titled *Museums at the Crossroads: Local Encounters, Global Knowledge* (IU Bloomington 2015). Among the participants was Wang Wei, then Director of the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, one of the six partner museums. With a long personal history of participation in international research projects, Wang Wei was an extremely energetic supporter of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice effort, seeing it as a major opportunity for professional development and growth for the mostly young staff of the museum he led. With plenty of time available for discussion, Wang Wei and Jackson reflected on the sub-project then well underway. With the *Quilts of Southwest China* soon to open at Michigan State University Museum and all of the project convenings recently completed, discussions turned to next steps. Wanting to build on the momentum already in place, Wang Wei suggested to Jackson that a transition from exhibition work, scholarly exchange, professional development, and relationship building activities to full-fledged joint research would be warranted. He suggested that his museum take the lead and host project participants for a series of research projects in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. As he imagined it, this work could build upon the ongoing efforts of his museum's ecomuseum-focused research group and with one or more of the ten community-based ecomuseums that the museum was then supporting in its 1+10 initiative (Mo 2015; Gong 2016; Zhang Lijun 2021).

Central to the work anticipated by Wang Wei was Zhang Lijun, a former advisee of Jackson's who was by then on the staff of the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities and working as part of the ecomuseums research group. As Wang Wei and Jackson imagined this new work in Bloomington, Zhang Lijun was busy finalizing the *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition and catalogue with co-curator and co-editor MacDowell of the Michigan State University Museum.

To explore the possibility of a new phase of work that would include joint research, Jackson traveled to Guangxi in May 2016. With staff from the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, he visited two potential research sites where work with two local ecomuseums was strong. For this exploration, the team was hosted by these partners—the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao shengtai bowuguan) in Nandan County and the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum (Sanjiang Dongzu shengtai bowuguan) in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, both in northern Guangxi near the border with Guizhou Province.<sup>13</sup> These visits were successful, and plans for further work intensified, with Jackson working with Lloyd to author a third grant proposal to the Luce Foundation. That grant funded American participation in the new sub-project for the period 2016–2019 (specifically travel to and from Guangxi) as well as the summer institutes sub-project for the same period.<sup>14</sup> The objectives of the sub-project are discussed in the context of implementation in the remaining sections of this article.



### *Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies, 2016–2019*

As presented to the Luce Foundation, the new phase of work, undertaken within the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project emphasized partnered museum-based folklore and heritage studies work in two interconnected ways: (1) original field research in Guangxi on craft (specifically textiles) and ICH and (2) convenings related to professional development and research reporting. These activities would build upon past work to enrich museum-based folklore practice in the two countries; to foster increased centrality for museum-based work within the larger folklore studies field in China, the United States, and internationally; and to enhance general understanding of cultural diversity and cultural heritage in the two countries. Wang Wei and Jackson served as co-leaders for this phase of work. Drawing upon her bi-national training, her fluency in Mandarin and English, and her formal ties to the two lead museums, Zhang Lijun played a crucial project manager role throughout the sub-project.

In addition to the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities and the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, the continuing partners for this part of the project were the Museum of International Folk Art and the MSU Museum. Joining the effort as new partners were the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum and the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum. The two additional provincial nationalities museums from the earlier 2013–2016 museums sub-project remained involved in a subset of sub-project activities as discussed below. These institutions are the Guizhou Nationalities Museum and the Yunnan Nationalities Museum. In these contexts, the partnerships expanded from a network of six museums to eight, with the inclusion of the two nationally prominent ecomuseums (fig. 1).<sup>15</sup>

#### *Convenings*

As noted, there were two core activities for the sub-project during 2017–2019. One focus was research on heritage issues as these arise within the domain of textile practices found among minority nationalities groups in Guangxi. The other focus was convenings aimed at advancing the work of the sub-project and the field. The project convenings are discussed first, with the research activities discussed in the section that follows.

The sub-project's first convening was a training event held in Nanning at the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities (December 11–12, 2017). While the bi-national project team's ethnographic research needed to be, by practical necessity, relatively modest in scale of participation, it was hoped that the gathering together of the distributed research team in Guangxi would afford an opportunity for a larger group of participants to assemble for a training workshop. Happily, this vision was realized. With the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities as host, more than 70 participants attended a 2-day training "Workshop on Ethnographic Methods in Museum Folklore and Ethnology." Attendees came from ecomuseums distributed around the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, from other museums in and around Nanning, and from various local universities with programs in ethnology and heritage work. As the audience was primarily

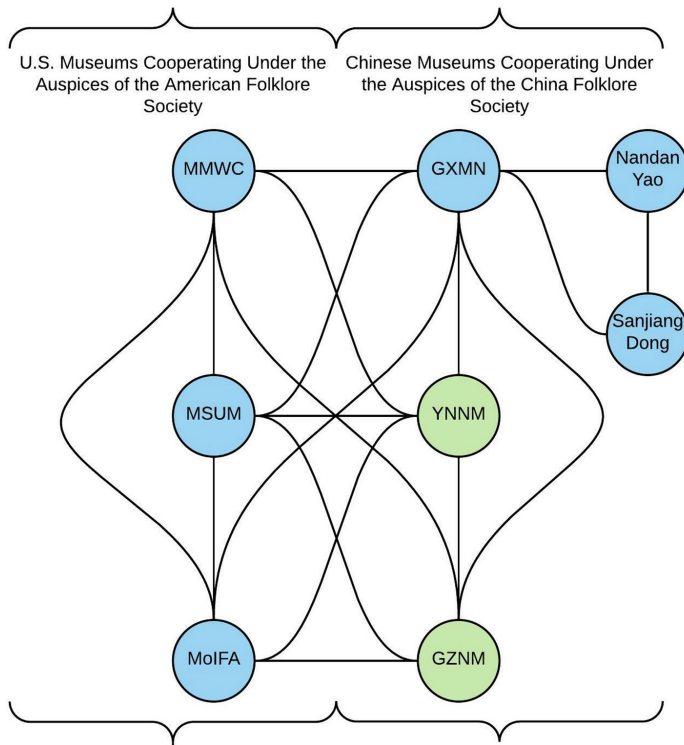


Figure 1. A diagram illustrating the institutional partnerships central to the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project within the larger China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. Museums whose only involvement was hosting a sub-project exhibition are not shown. The research partners working together in Guangxi are shown in darker shading. MMWC = Mathers Museum of World Cultures, MSUM = Michigan State University Museum, MoIFA = Museum of International Folk Art, GXMN = Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, YNNM = Yunnan Nationalities Museum, GZNM = Guizhou Nationalities Museum, Nandan Yao = Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum, and Sanjiang Dong = Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum.

Mandarin-speaking, presenters who were not fluent in Mandarin spoke in English, and their full presentations were translated live into Mandarin. Those fluent in Mandarin spoke only in Mandarin, with speakers or translators providing short English summaries. Translations were done orally as the event progressed, but prepared slides were often bilingual. Topics included an introduction to museum-based ethnography (Jackson), interview techniques (MacDowell), survey and video methods (Jon Kay), photographic methods (Carrie Hertz), collecting (Dewhurst), ecomuseum development (Gong Shiyang), and costume research techniques (Fan Miaomiao). Audiences for these methods presentations were attentive and interested. Because the audience also included new participants to the larger research endeavor—from the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum, and the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum—the workshop also provided a chance to strengthen the skills and shared background of the larger research team. As with cognate events held within

other sub-projects, the methods workshop in Nanning represented another in the larger effort's series of inclusive professional development and exchange experiences.

The sub-project team's next gathering took place on July 15, 2018. Initially, it was thought that the July 2018 research trip would not include a convening, but the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities arranged to open the traveling exhibition *Quilting Art and Tradition—People, Handcrafts and Community Life* [a.k.a. *Quilts of Southwest China*] at the start of the second research trip. This timing allowed the research team to participate in the exhibition-focused opening ceremonies, and it provided an opportunity for delegates from the Yunnan Nationalities Museum and Guizhou Nationalities Museum to attend, enabling all eight core museum partners to be co-present and to continue discussions face-to-face. Representing the United States delegation, Dewhurst spoke at the opening ceremonies, and Hertz delivered a special lecture as a guest. The lecture focused on her study of relevant museum collections and her ethnographic fieldwork on Scandinavian costume and textiles. In her presentation, she drew connections to her participation in the cognate work in China (Hertz 2021). With this event, the research project was leveraged into a second large public-facing scholarly convening in Nanning.

The third sub-project convening was "The Seventh Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies." Building on the success of the preceding six Luce Foundation-supported, co-hosted ICH forums, this event was held at the Indiana University China Gateway in Beijing on May 19–22, 2019. Because the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities took the lead responsibility for hosting and funding project activities in Nanning and around Guangxi, the Mathers Museum of World Cultures served as the lead organizing co-host for the Beijing forum, with AFS Executive Director Turner playing a central role in the effort. The forum co-hosts, funders, and organizers are noted in the printed program (Jackson et al. 2019), and the report on the forum was published on the AFS and CFS websites and in *Museum Anthropology Review* (Jackson 2021). The forum provided an opportunity for the museums' sub-project to connect with the Beijing-based leadership of the CFS, and it enabled core project participants from the eight museums to meet and learn from a wider group of US and Chinese folklorists and museum ethnography professionals. The printed program evokes the scholarly and professional scope of the forum, which was focused on US, Chinese, and shared practices of museum-community engagement (Jackson et al. 2019). As is normal for the ICH forum series, participants benefitted from a curated cultural outing. For the Seventh Forum, this entailed a lecture about, and guided tour of, the historic Shichahai district known for its preservation of *hutong* (alleyway) and *siheyuan* (quadrangle) architecture. While relatively well-known to elite travelers, for many forum participants, not only American but also Chinese, the Seventh Forum was their first visit to Beijing. The fieldtrip was more of an experience of mutual discovery than one might expect for a gathering with a large Chinese audience. Zhang Lijun's original folklore research enhanced and contextualized the experience (Zhang Lijun 2016, 2019a).

An additional convening was planned to co-occur with the fourth research trip. Cancellation of this research trip (discussed below) precluded that gathering. The format of this event was to have been a small group research seminar in which

participants would discuss their findings and plan for future publications and exhibitions. While it did not take place in Nanning in July 2019 as planned, the goals of this gathering have been advanced through two later events, one held online in September 2021 and the other funded and planned for a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has abated and travel is again possible.

The goals of the intended research workshop were realized during a September 16–17, 2021, online symposium titled “Material Culture and Heritage Safeguarding in Southwest China” and presented by the International Folklore Studies Center, a joint research center of the Department of Chinese Folklore Studies, School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University, and the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, College of Arts and Sciences, Indiana University. Nine members of the sub-project research team presented eight research papers in this 2-day event. As detailed in a separate published report: “One hundred and twenty-one individuals registered for Day 1 and ninety-seven registered for Day 2, with actual participations being just a bit below these numbers” (Jackson, Zhang Lijun, and Wuerxiya 2021:117).

It is always risky to commit to print anticipatory activities, especially during a tumultuous time in global affairs and in a project that has already had to adapt to unexpected developments. When conditions allow, a workshop titled “Textile Arts and Heritage Practices in Southwest China” is planned to be held at Indiana University. This projected convening of 10 sub-project research team members together with the Director of the Indiana University Press and AFS Executive Director Turner will include a book workshop and a campus-facing symposium examining textile arts among the minority nationalities of China’s mountainous Southwest. Of central concern is the impact of China’s extensive heritage policies on arts and communities. Funding for this 3-day workshop and symposium event has been secured.<sup>16</sup> While it will include a public event for the benefit of the Indiana University campus community, the most intensive activity will be workshopping book chapters with the goal of producing a comprehensive edited volume sharing research findings from the sub-project.

Supplementing these larger events, the sub-project shared its work through lectures and conference panels, including (1) “Museum Folklore and the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project: Retrospects and Prospects” at the 2017 AFS annual conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota; (2) “Material Culture Studies among the Baiku Yao of China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,” at the 2018 AFS annual conference in Buffalo, New York; and (3) “Material Culture and Heritage Studies in Northern Guangxi, China: Ethnographic Reports from the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project” at the 2019 AFS annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. A panel accepted for the 2020 AFS annual was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but was later developed into the September 16–17, 2021, symposium noted above. Individuals involved in the sub-project also presented aspects of the work individually at conferences and in public lectures.

In summary, the sub-project sustained an active program of convenings throughout the span of the endeavor. These gatherings attracted significant and interested audiences that experienced a rich mix of professional development experiences and reporting of project and cognate research findings. The research activities most central to the sub-project are chronicled in the next section.

## Research

The research undertaken by the bi-national team was very fruitful. Much was experienced, documented, and learned by the team members. Knowledgeable and skilled people from the Dong, Yao, and Bai nationalities were met and interviewed. Museum collections were assembled and documented. Documentary video was recorded, and some final works have already been produced on the basis of this unique footage (Kay 2018, 2019). Building on this work, team members have developed conference papers and a growing number of published writings.<sup>17</sup> Participants have learned not only about each other's ways of working, but have also learned much about the rich textile traditions of Guangxi specifically and Southwest China more broadly. The collaborators have also learned about the ways that tourism, government ICH master (inheritor) designations, formal training workshops, and other heritage interventions are reshaping textile and other craft practices and the lives of their practitioners (Zhang Lijun et al. 2022; Wuerxiya et al. 2022). The members of the research team look forward to continuing to share their results in writing, media, and future museum exhibitions. In addition, participants in this work plan to put their experiences into dialogue with other kinds of collaborative folklore studies projects operating at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

Originally, the research plan approved by the partners and funded by the Luce Foundation foresaw four fieldwork trips to northern Guangxi. This plan included two trips to Nandan County, home of the Baiku Yao people and their ecomuseum, and two trips to Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, home to a large number of Dong people and the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum. As the project came to pass, the team visited each of these locales only once during the span of the sub-project, although numerous team members visited them on other occasions separately. The first two visits, which were completed as planned, are discussed first, and then the special circumstances of the third trip will be described. The third trip presented an opportunity for cognate research among the Bai people of Yunnan province. Discussion of the third trip offers a context for addressing the cancelation of the fourth planned trip.

The research team visited Nandan County at the conclusion of the December 2017 training event discussed above. The research participants were fortunate to live during this period of work (December 13–18, 2017) in the village cluster where the Baiku Yao ecomuseum is based. During nearly a week of fieldwork, the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum staff played central roles, not only as hosts and translators, but also as co-investigators.<sup>18</sup> Members of the five-museum team interviewed key Baiku Yao textile artists and craftspeople and learned about a range of expressive forms. The team documented loom weaving, bamboo basketmaking, basketry-related bamboo building, indigo dyeing, silkworm cultivation, silk felt production, embroidery, and the sewing of Yao national dress, quilts, and funeral shrouds (fig. 2).<sup>19</sup> As noted, this research has resulted in a sizeable number of research presentations and a growing body of publications. It has also contributed to comparative understandings developed over the course of both museum-related sub-projects. The Baiku Yao case is important because they reside in a region that has not been markedly successful in terms of heritage tourism efforts, and governmental ICH initiatives exist but are not extensive. This situation contrasted with the other field site in Sanjiang Dong



Figure 2. Huatu village, part of the cluster of natural villages that is home to the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum. December 14, 2017, Nandan County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Photo credit: Jason Baird Jackson.



Autonomous County. It contrasts particularly strongly with the situation of the Bai near Dali, Yunnan, to be discussed below.

Between July 16 and July 20, 2018, the joint Chinese and US research team traveled again together to northern Guangxi, this time focusing on the situation of the Dong in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County. In contrast to the situation in Nandan County, the team visited multiple locales in the county, with the most intensive work in Tongle Miao Ethnic Township and in the county seat of Guyi, where the team stayed. The expressive forms paralleled those documented for the Baiku Yao, with a special focus on basketry, embroidery, and Dong national dress. Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County is home to many key landmarks and heritage sites popular with national and international tourists and to artists recognized in the Chinese multi-level government ICH master designation system. These masters are then positioned centrally in training programs aimed at promoting and encouraging recognized arts such as Dong embroidery. In both the Nandan and Sanjiang contexts, the team explored the strong contrast between embroidery (practiced mainly by women, celebrated as iconic of Dong and Yao identities, and strongly articulated within China's UNESCO-informed national ICH policy) and basketry (practiced mainly by men, not central to minority identity representations, and mostly ignored within official heritage policy). As with the 2017 Nandan work, experiences in Sanjiang were richly facilitated by the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum staff. As with the 2017 Nandan work, the team has already begun presenting about and publishing based on this research (fig. 3).<sup>20</sup>

Following "The Seventh Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage" in Beijing in May 2019, the research team planned to return to Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County for a second period of research at a different time of year,





Figure 3. Dong embroidery artist Yang Tian displays a paper cut embroidery pattern that she has just completed during a documentation session with members of the Sanjiang research team. July 17, 2018, Tongle Miao Ethnic Township, Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Photo credit: Jason Baird Jackson.

characterized by different seasonal cultural activities. To the regret of the project leadership and participants, final administrative approval to visit the county could not be obtained in time from the then-recently reorganized Ministry of Culture and Tourism. While the total range of factors shaping the situation are not known, this dynamic unfolded during a complicated period of change on the local, national, and international scenes. One concurrent factor on the local level was project leader and Guangxi Museum of Nationalities Director Wang Wei securing a key university research professorship in the period prior to the May 2019 trip, leaving the directorship unfilled in this period. The US participants in the project are grateful for the extensive work that the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities staff invested in both the successful May 2019 Beijing forum and in planning the Sanjiang trip that was not authorized to go forward.

While the sub-project participants were gathered together in Beijing for the seventh forum, they maintained hope that approval would still come for the joint research in Sanjiang. When it did not, a promising new plan was quickly devised by the research team and other forum participants. In this new plan, the US-based research team members would undertake a week of partnered research on craft and heritage policy among the Bai people in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan. A forum participant made contact with the leadership of the Institute for National Culture Research at Dali University and arranged for the Institute to host this joint research (Wuerxiya et al. 2022). The Institute thereby became a new sub-project research partner. This was a generous and generative outcome, one that reflects the durability of the strong professional networks that have grown up over the years of the wider partnership linking Chinese and United States-based folklorists and ICH professionals.

The US team had already considered visiting the Dali area as tourists as a contingency plan, because at the start of the preceding sub-project in December 2013, some members of the current team (Dewhurst, Jackson, MacDowell) had been hosted for 2 days there by the Yunnan Nationalities Museum. They looked forward to revisiting Dali, where they could learn informally and independently while relying on the tourist infrastructure. What happened instead was much better. The faculty and students at Dali University who were involved in local ethnographic research projects in the Dali area hosted the team and pursued a program of joint research around shared interests in craft and ICH. The 2019 research in Yunnan took place between May 22 and May 28.

The research goals the bi-national team had been pursuing in northern Guangxi translated well to the Bai context, and these interests and goals were convergent with those held by the Dali University researchers. Thereby, together, over the course of 6 days, the joint Dali University-US-based team undertook a craft and heritage survey in Bai villages and towns around Erhai Lake and north in Yunnan as far as Heqing County (Wuerxiya et al. 2022) (fig. 4). The team studied tie-dyed indigo textiles, national dress, fabric arts, and basketry, and extended further to include woodcarving, silverwork, and pottery. In addition, the team participated in a major Bai festival taking place during its visit. Equal in value to meeting a range of talented Bai craft inheritors was working closely and collaboratively with researcher colleagues from the Institute for National Culture Research.<sup>21</sup>

While unexpected, the work in the Dali area greatly enhanced the larger research effort, providing an unexpected third detailed case for comparison. As the Bai people and the Dali area were central to the development of the whole enterprise of minority cultural heritage tourism in Southwest China, the opportunity to experience local



Figure 4. Members of the “Survey of Contemporary Bai Craft Practices in the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture” research team on May 26, 2019, photographed with indigo tie-dye artists at the Puzhen tie-dye workshop where Duan Shukun and Duan Yinkai are masters. Duan Yinkai is third from the right in the front row, Duan Shukun is second from the left in the front row. Photo credit: Jon Kay.

crafts and to talk directly with Bai ICH inheritors (masters) who have been recognized at the national, provincial, prefectural, and county levels and who are training a new generation of craftspeople was invaluable, as was getting detailed information on the intersection of heritage tourism and ICH recognition and training systems. As in Nandan and Sanjiang, the US-based participants were also able to make important museum (i.e., object) collections among the Bai people in Dali. As in the Guangxi research sites, extensive video and photographic documentation was gathered. Also as in Guangxi, bilingual and trilingual interviews were recorded and are being transcribed and translated by team members and partners.

The key takeaway of the May 2019 research is that what could have been a disappointing outcome of an administrative difficulty turned—because of the strength of the larger project's networks, partnerships, and relationships—into an extraordinarily positive experience for the US-based participants and their partners at Dali University and Yunnan University.<sup>22</sup> Those involved in this sub-project look forward to contributing to future reflections—at the scale of the whole China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project—on the general nature of partnership and relationship building in and for folklore studies.

The fourth of four research trips was planned for July of 2019. This was to have been later in the same summer as the anticipated May 2019 trip to Sanjiang. Plans for the July 2019 research, which was to have taken place in Nandan County, had already been moved ahead throughout 2019, running alongside plans for the May 2019 research. It may have been that having two trips under concurrent administrative consideration added to the complexity that hindered the approval process. In the context of what happened with the Sanjiang trip for May and in light of the fact that approvals for the July trip were also not yet granted, the sub-project leaders (Jackson [for the US team], Turner [for AFS], and Gong [for the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities]) decided not to proceed with the July 2019 trip.

### *The Interim Phase, 2020–2021*

The official period of work for the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project was 2017–2019. It takes time to turn research findings into published works, and it also takes time to reassess changing circumstances and to develop plans for new work. The China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project as a whole has been not only extraordinarily generative, but also resilient and durable, even in the face of unexpected challenges. Sub-project collaborators expect that the relationships that have grown through the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project will remain durable in the face of the challenges that have arisen in China-US relations during the sub-project period and despite the travel difficulties that began with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019.

Eager to preserve the momentum and identity of the sub-project and the larger umbrella project in a time in which a major new round of sub-projects could not be developed, funded, or launched by the AFS and CFS partners, AFS Executive Director Turner and Jackson as sub-project co-leader conferred with stakeholders and announced a 2-year extension for the sub-project and, by extension, a 2-year interim

phase for the umbrella project as a whole. This interim phase encompassed 2020 and 2021. The focus of this period was developing research works (articles, books, and documentary films) grounded in the research undertaken during 2017–2019 and in the longer period of cooperation and professional exchange that began in 2013 with the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice sub-project. While this work will continue beyond the formal interim phase, sub-project participants feel positive about the work accomplished so far, as discussed throughout this account of the larger effort. Like hundreds of other colleagues in China and the United States whose lives and careers have intersected with the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project, the sub-project participants are thankful and confident that new opportunities to work collaboratively in the years and decades to come will arise on top of the fruitful collaborations that began informally at the turn of the century and formally in 2007.

### *Conclusion*

While much would surely have been learned from second trips to Sanjiang and Nandan, the shifting team's three trips (Nandan, Sanjiang, Dali) were incredibly valuable for all participants. As with the preceding museums sub-project (2013–2016), the work accomplished in 2017–2021 far exceeded the hopes of the planners and participants. The sub-project's work in this phase will continue to bear fruit—exhibitions, collections and field research reports, catalogues, books, videos, lectures, conference presentations, and articles—for many years to come. The ethnographic findings, including the extensive museum collections assembled, will stand as a permanent part of the cultural record for the minority nationalities (Bai, Dong, Yao).<sup>23</sup> As was hoped for, these museum collections are now the most extensive and best-documented collections of their type in US museums. The deeper understanding that the project team members—both Chinese (Han [including Hakka], Bai, Dong, Yao, Zhuang, Mongol, Tujia, Mulao) and American—have of Chinese heritage practices and policies will serve them in their museum work and in their scholarship and public practice efforts more broadly. The sub-project has also contributed more generally to the success of the larger China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. Most importantly, durable relationships and deeper understandings between Chinese and US-based folklorists have grown up and been sustained through mutual work together.

This essay is not the best place to recount the still-emergent findings of the research team, but it is possible to observe one general point in closing. One of the two objectives of the endeavor described here was to learn about the present-day status of craft practices among the peoples of Southwest China's rural uplands (Michaud, Barkataki-Ruscheweyh, and Swain 2016:361–2). While a worthwhile end in itself, our team's studies of craft were undertaken with an interwoven interest in the impact of ICH policies on these crafts, on those who pursue them, and on the communities out of which they arise. Sub-project participants found some of what our colleagues working elsewhere in the world would expect to find. Similar to other regions where ICH activity is intense, Southwest China is also a region marked by romantic and nostalgic cultural tourism, the arrival and influence of non-local economic and government interests, varied and sometimes profound metacultural transformations, and contests

over rights and resources. These themes are all now well-established in the heritage studies literature in and beyond folkloristics. On-the-ground work showed team members that, as diverse as this recurring set of common themes and patterns is, it captures only part of the larger story. Members of the sub-project team have begun writing about *what else* is (also) going on at the intersection of craft and ICH interventions in this region (Wuerxiya et al. 2022; Zhang Lijun et al. 2022). After the sub-project's history and contexts have been described, the background is in place, and the sub-project team invites colleagues to follow along with the descriptive and interpretive work that is still ahead. Southwest China is a beautiful and varied region. Surprises exist there among commonplaces. The peoples of Southwest China are generous, their cultures rich, their handworks marvelous, and their social circumstances—past and present—complex. All deserve close, collaborative consideration. As always, there is something additional going on.

### Acknowledgments

Hundreds of colleagues have been active participants in the various activities described here, and hundreds more members of local communities in the United States and in China have connected with these colleagues in the course of many encounters across language, culture, organizations, institutions, locales, and nations. I express here my thanks to everyone in this vast network, including the community, organizational, museum, and scholarly society leaders who fostered our work together. Neither these individuals nor the colleagues whom I name next are responsible for any infelicities in this article. In connection with this specific work, I thank *Journal of American Folklore* (JAF) editor Lisa Gilman, the JAF editorial staff, two generous but anonymous peer reviewers, Timothy Lloyd, Jessica Anderson Turner, C. Kurt Dewhurst, and the members of the core sub-project team. Special thanks are offered to Zhang Lijun, whose contributions to this paper and to the projects that it describes have been multifaceted and essential.

In addition to the keystone support provided by the Henry Luce Foundation and the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, other funders for the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project were the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation; the Institute for National Culture Research (Dali University); the Guizhou Nationalities Museum; the Office of the Vice President for International Affairs, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, the College Arts and Humanities Institute, the Institute for Advanced Study, and the Mathers Museum of World Cultures (all at Indiana University); the International Folk Art Foundation, the Asian Studies Center and the Michigan State University Museum (both at Michigan State University); the Museum of International Folk Art; the Museum of New Mexico Foundation; the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum; the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum; the Sanjiang Museum (Sanjiang bowuguan); and the Yunnan Nationalities Museum. Deep appreciation for all of these supporters is recorded here. As with the individuals supporting the project, none of these institutions are responsible for deficiencies in this article or other sub-project products.

### Notes

1. Throughout the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project, special care has been taken in matters of language, with great effort invested in bilingual presentation of forum, institute, and conference programs and full translation of presentations and publications whenever possible. It is hoped that a Chinese-language version of this article can be published in China. These issues of language relate to the issue of names herein. Individuals with English personal and family names are named in the conventional English-language order with personal name preceding family name on first occurrence in narrative passages. Even when, in a different English-language context, things might be done otherwise, individuals with Chinese-language personal and family names are consistently named in the normal Chinese order, with family name given first. Thus, for instance, Xie Mohua's family name Xie is given before his personal name Mohua, and his bilingual book chapter is cited as (Xie 2017). In the References



Cited section, his name is given as Xie Mohua without the comma that conventionally signals that an English (etc.) family name is being given first for purposes of alphabetization.

In dealing with language issues, the author and editors use a style somewhat based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*. They use the (U.S.) Library of Congress' "New Chinese Romanization Guidelines" produced by the Pinyin Conversion Project with the exception that the *hanyu pinyin* forms are not divided by syllable. In this, the author and editors follow publishing convention within the field of folklore studies.

2. It is my hope that additional published works reflecting on and documenting the other sub-projects within the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project will be written and published in the future by participants in those endeavors. Works considering the whole project would also be of great value, and I hope that this article will be useful for such an all-project report. One anonymous peer reviewer of this article asked that I describe the "initial motivation" and/or "objective" of the larger United States-China partnership project and how this was achieved, including the consequences for the "building" of the folklore studies discipline in China and the United States. My collaborators and I hope that such issues can be given fuller treatment later, but here I can address this broader topic by quoting key passages from the initial funding proposal to the Luce Foundation. These excerpts were kindly provided to me by Timothy Lloyd (email, March 24, 2022), drawing upon the relevant American Folklore Society proposal document of 2011. I follow them with a brief remark on the question of their realization and disciplinary enrichment.

The project aimed to bring together academic and public education institutions in China and the United States to

- (1) chart, compare, analyze, and communicate widely about tradition-based cultural expressions, and efforts to document, support, and sustain those expressions, in our two countries;
- (2) build lasting and sustainable partnerships among cultural professionals and institutions in both countries through a varied program of collaborative activities;
- (3) and generate permanent products of lasting value, in hard-copy and online media, documenting the ecology of extant activities and best practices to sustain tradition-based culture, to be disseminated among academic, arts, cultural, government, and public policy communities in both countries.

The founding project leaders stressed that

this initiative will use the lenses of the field of folklore studies to compare and analyze a wide range of activities in China and the US—supported by government, the private sector, and community-based organizations—intended to sustain tradition-based culture through research, documentation, education, presentation, and conservation.

In realizing those goals, the early project architects also conveyed some principles and working assumptions for the work that I cite here for context. These approaches emerged from the initial period of informal planning and exchange (2007–2011) that preceded the first proposal to the Luce Foundation.

In the course of this preliminary work, four criteria for developing the effort [became] clear:

- (1) Because the frame surrounding policy, theory, and practice in work with folklore and intangible cultural heritage varies greatly between the US and China, a comparative approach must be an essential feature of the [project].
- (2) In both the US and China, the state of traditional culture and intangible cultural heritage research is influenced by university-trained scholars, by professionals operating from public institutions such as museums and libraries, and by public policies and corporate practices. The [project] must engage all three arenas of action.
- (3) Programs addressing economic development, cultural tourism, community development, or preservation of the natural environment have frequently generated negative unintended consequences that have affected the well-being of intangible cultural heritage, traditional practices, and folklore studies. Therefore, the [project] must coordinate its work with the agendas of other actors in the public and private spheres.
- (4) To ensure that the insights, recommendations, and documentation of the [project] are effective and permanent, all meeting and conference programs must be bilingual, and minutes, summaries, articles, and reports will be circulated in print, online, and through digital publication. Further,



whenever possible, the future work of the [project] must be secured through the execution of long-term multi-institution agreements.

I was aware of the umbrella project beginning in the preliminary period, but my ongoing and active involvement in it only began with the second project phase. Since 2013, I have observed firsthand the successful pursuit of the three objectives noted above, and my colleagues and I have witnessed the good sense embodied in the working principles enumerated here. I hope that this report provides evidence of the good work accomplished within the two sequential museums-focused sub-projects. Other writings cited herein document, in part, the work of other parts of the larger project. I think that it would be fair, until more comprehensive assessments can be done, to extrapolate from the sub-project work described here to the larger project as a whole. In our sub-project team's experience, those other efforts were successful, and they operated in accord with the goals and principles just described. With a very large number of Chinese and US-based folklorists participating in a wide range of project activities, I feel confident that empirical assessment in the future will validate my provisional claims of significant disciplinary impact in both countries.

3. "The First Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage" with the subtitle "Comparative Policies" was held on November 6–7, 2011, in Foshan, Guangdong, China (Kang, Ivey, and Lloyd 2011). "The Second Forum on China-US Intangible Cultural Heritage: Case Studies" was held in Nashville, Tennessee, United States, between April 29 and May 1, 2012 (Kang, Ivey, and Lloyd 2012). Taking place in Wuhan, Hubei, China, on November 16–18, 2012, was "The Third Forum on China-US Intangible Cultural Heritage: Productive Safeguarding" (Huang Yonglin et al. 2012). The series returned to the United States on May 23–24, 2013, when "The Fourth Forum on China-US Intangible Cultural Heritage: Fieldwork, Documentation, Preservation, and Access" was held in Washington, DC, United States (Ivey, Lloyd, and Song 2013). These first four forums were a central effort of the work carried out with the first grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. The fifth and sixth forums arose from the museums-focused work of the second Luce grant. "The Fifth Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Bridging Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Ethnographic Museums and Heritage Sites" was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States, on November 10–11, 2014 (Bol et al. 2014). The sixth forum, titled "China-US Nationalities Museums Cooperative Project Forum" was held in Guiyang, Guizhou, China, on April 12–14, 2015 (Gao Cong 2015). The seventh forum arose out of the third period of Luce-funded work and was central to the sub-project of concern here. "The Seventh Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies" took place in Beijing, China, on May 19–21, 2019 (Jackson et al. 2019; Jackson 2021).

4. The "Summer Folklore Institutes" constituted the second major sub-project of the larger umbrella project during the third formal phase of work (2017–2019). As with the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project, the Henry Luce Foundation provided major support with additional support coming from other project partners and funders. Run as a proof-of-concept activity, the 2016 Summer Folklore Institute was held in Huhhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China, from July 16–23, with Inner Mongolia Normal University serving as the local host. That event was preceded by a preliminary visit to Huhhot for a conference and associated planning (August 15–18, 2015). The 2017 Summer Institute was held in Hailar, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China, on July 16–27 at Hulunbuir University. Hosted by AFS at the School of Advanced Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States, the 2018 Summer Institute took place on June 1–13 and had the theme "How Communities Present Themselves to Others." The 2019 Summer Folklore Institute, with the theme "Building Capacity for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage," was held on July 13–19 at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.

5. A closely related fourth Luce Foundation grant was made to the Michigan State University Museum in 2015 to support activities related to the *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition. Co-curator MacDowell was the principal investigator for this award.

6. For a nearly complete list of project funders through 2017, see Lloyd (2017b). It is hoped that a report on the Summer Folklore Institutes sub-project (2017–2019) will be published separately, allowing for acknowledgment of that sub-project's additional funders.

7. Michael Owen Jones, AFS president for 2004–2005, was a participant in initial exchange activities between United States and Chinese folklorists (Jones 2017). Bill Ivey (2006–2007) followed Jones as

AFS president. In consultation with the AFS board and building on his travels in China as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts in the late 1990s and his relationships with scholars and policy leaders there, Ivey took a leadership role in the China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project as a whole, working in partnership with CFS presidents Liu and Chao. His contributions to the larger effort are numerous and include hosting the “Second Forum on China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage” and co-editing the bilingual proceedings of the first four for events with Song Junhua (Ivey 2017; Song and Ivey 2017). As suggested throughout this article, Dewhurst, who was AFS president during 2010–2011, was instrumental to the establishment of the umbrella project and has been at the heart of both museum-oriented sub-projects (Dewhurst 2017). Diane Goldstein, AFS president during 2012–2013, participated in the second forum and traveled to China in connection with project activities, as did Michael Ann Williams, who served as AFS president in 2014–2015. Williams also participated in the first, fifth, and sixth forums on China-US Folklore and ICH, and she was a faculty member for the 2016 Summer Institute (Williams 2017). Dorothy Noyes, AFS president during 2018–2019, was a participant in the Fifth Forum on China-US Folklore and ICH and consulted on the work of the project actively throughout her presidency. All AFS presidents throughout 2007–2021 consulted regularly about the project whether or not they themselves were active participants. As noted in the text, CFS President Ye Tao was, like his predecessors, affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences at the time of his appointment, but since September 2020, he has served as a professor at Shandong University.

8. During the second Luce Foundation funded phase (2013–2016), the other sub-project running in parallel with the ICH and Ethnographic Museum Practice one was titled the “Project on Academic and Public Education in Intangible Cultural Heritage and Public Folklore.” Led by Zhang Juwen (Willamette University) for the AFS and by Huang Yonglin (Central China Normal University) for the CFS, its primary activities included (1) a syllabus translation and sharing project, (2) a database focused on dissertations related to ICH topics, (3) a resource handbook relating to ICH practices in China, and (4) two methodological workshops on video documentation of ICH. The first workshop was held in Wuhan, Hubei, China, May 29–June 6, 2014. The second workshop took place in two parts split over the period December 13, 2015, to January 1, 2016. The first phase of the second workshop was held again in Wuhan on December 13–20, 2015. In the second phase, some participants did documentary work in various locations in Oregon, United States, while others continued work in Wuhan (Zhang Juwen 2014, 2016).

9. The phrase “nationalities museums” refers to museums focused on representing the history, culture, and arts particular to specific ethnic groups (nationalities). While usually referring to the 56 groups in China that are officially recognized by the Chinese government (the Han majority, plus 55 minority groups), the phrase is sometimes extended to also refer to other peoples found outside China. In this sense, the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities presented, during the period of this sub-project, an exhibition hall devoted to objects representative of a variety of world cultural groups.

10. The Guangxi Museum of Nationalities adopted the name Anthropology Museum of Guangxi for English-language communication during the period of the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies sub-project. Its underlying Chinese name is unchanged. For clarity, the name used at the start of the sub-project and in related publications—Guangxi Museum of Nationalities—is used consistently here. The Mathers Museum of World Cultures was closed at the end of 2019, with its staff, collections, and building becoming part of a new museum—the Indiana University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. From 2013–2019, the Mathers Museum was an institutional partner within the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ethnographic Museum Practice (2013–2016) and the Collaborative Work in Museum Folklore and Heritage Studies (2016–2019) sub-projects. It was not formally a part of the interim phase (2020–2021) discussed later in this article. With the conclusion of Jackson’s museum directorship at the end of 2019, none of the original six partner museums were led by directors who formally initiated the cooperation work in December 2013. The underlying institutional partnership agreements have concluded, and it is the shared sense of the participants that future joint work will, for the period ahead, continue on a more individualized rather than museum-institutionalized basis.

11. In the United States, the *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition was circulated by the Michigan State University Museum, appearing first there (September 27, 2015, to May 1, 2016) and then traveling to the International Quilt Museum (June 3 to September 28, 2016), the Mathers Museum of World Cultures (January 21 to May 7, 2017), and the Museum of International Folk Art (July 9, 2017, to January 21,

2018). With the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities as the organizing museum, the exhibition (as *Quilting Art and Tradition: People, Handcrafts, and Community Life*) was presented at the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities (July 15 to August 31, 2018), the Yunnan Nationalities Museum (November 15 to December 28, 2018), Yulin Museum (in Guangxi, March 16 to June 3, 2019), and Chongzuo Zhuang Museum (in Guangxi, October 20 to December 20, 2020).

12. *Putting Baskets to Work in Southwest China* was co-curated by Zhang Lijun and Jackson. It appeared at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures between September 1, 2015, and February 7, 2016. It was supported by a Themester co-curricular grant from Indiana University's College of Arts and Sciences. An expanded version of this exhibition was presented at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History from June 9 to August 12, 2018. The exhibition *Baina—Zhuangzu pinbu beimian yishu zhan* (officially known in English as *Zhuang Patchwork Art*) was curated by the exhibitions department of the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, where it was presented from August 6 to September 6, 2015. Han Xiaoxing curated *Walking in Love*, which was presented by the Michigan State University Museum from February 7 to May 1, 2016. *Beijing's 798 Art Zone* was co-curated by Jackson and Luo Wenhong. It was funded by the Indiana University Arts and Humanities Council and ran from April 6 to December 17, 2017.

13. Financial support for the May 2016 planning trip was provided by an Emergency Grant-in-Aid of Research from Indiana University's Office of the Vice Provost for Research, and the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities. The fieldwork teams for the exploratory research in 2016 were comprised of (1) Nandan: Ai Lan (Guangxi Museum of Nationalities [GXMN]), Jackson (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), He Chun (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Lu Chaoming (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Luo Yong (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Tian Shuang'er (GXMN), Wang Caijin (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Wang Wei (GXMN), and Zheng Lin (GXMN); and (2) Sanjiang: Jackson (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Meng Qiuyue (GXMN), Tian (GXMN), Yang Quanzhong (Sanjiang Museum and Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum), and Zhang Lijun (GXMN).

14. While the 2015 "Museums at the Crossroads" conference and the exploratory trip in 2016 combined with the then ongoing sub-project work, including the *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition, provided the key contexts for developing the new museums sub-project, the summer institutes sub-project emerged not only from the general work of the larger project but, more specifically, from conversations supported with funding (2013–2014) from the Ford Foundation's Beijing office. That office later provided support (2015–2016) for a Summer 2015 planning meeting and then the running of the trial summer workshop in July 2016. Both planning and implementation for this initial workshop were undertaken in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region with Inner Mongolia Normal University playing a key hosting role (Lloyd, personal communication, September 19, 2016). For the full set of Folklore Summer Institutes (2016–2019), see note 4 above.

15. Four figures are presented in this article. A larger set of images in support of the article have been posted online in the IUScholarWorks Repository. See Jackson (2022).

16. Funding for the anticipated workshop has been provided by Indiana University's College Arts and Humanities Institute.

17. Conference panels, workshops, and special forum events at which sub-project-based papers and presentations were given were discussed in the Convenings section. Here, some of the published work arising from the sub-project under review is highlighted. The team's work on basketry is reflected in Jackson and Zhang (2019), Zhang Lijun et al. (2022), and Kay (2022). In addition to the bilingual catalogue for the *Quilts of Southwest China* exhibition and its constituent chapters (MacDowell and Zhang 2016), additional contributions to Chinese quilt studies by team members include articles by Hertz (2017) and Luo Wenhong (2020). A significant range of craft practices of the Bai people are examined in a paper by Wuerxiya et al. (2022). Publications on ecomuseum practices by team members include works by Gong (2016), and Zhang Lijun (2018) (see also Mo 2015). Discussions of the two consecutive museum sub-projects within the larger umbrella project include works by Dewhurst (2017), Du (2017), Dewhurst and Lloyd (2019), Jackson (2019, 2021), Jackson, Zhang, and Wuerxiya (2021), MacDowell (2017), Xie (2017), and Zhang Lijun (2017). Publication of the research findings is still at an initial stage and will continue into the future. When considering the fieldwork basis of extant and projected research works, it is useful to recognize that relevant travel in Southwest China took place during the prior sub-project and that those trips also have contributed to the research works being produced. In addition, some Chinese sub-project participants reside in the region, and their own research is ongoing.

18. The five museums represented were the three United States museums, the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, and the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum. For practical reasons, the Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum staff could not participate in the Nandan research, and the Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum staff could not participate in the Sanjiang research. The staff of these two ecomuseums did come together at the project convenings noted in this report. Team members for the Nandan County research were Dewhurst (MSU Museum), Fan (GXMN), He (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), He Jinxiu (Yao textile inheritor), Hertz (Museum of International Folk Art), Jackson (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Kay (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Liang Xiaoyan (GXMN), Lu (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Luo (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), MacDowell (MSU Museum), Mai Xi (GXMN), Ou Bo (GXMN), Wang Caijin (Nandan Lihu Baiku Yao Ecomuseum), Wang Yucheng (GXMN), and Zhang Lijun (GXMN).

19. For blog posts on the Nandan research written by members of the research team, see:

Carrie Hertz, Fieldwork: Highlights from the Textile Group, *Shreds and Patches* (blog), March 18, 2018, <https://jasonbairdjackson.com/2018/03/17/fieldwork-highlights-from-the-textile-group/>.

Fan Miaomiao, Zhong Mei bowuguan hezuozuo minzuzhi tianye diaocha xiaoji #1 [A Brief Note on a Chinese and American Museum Ethnographic Fieldwork Collaboration #1], *Miaomiao gongzuoshi* (Miaomiao Studio) (blog), December 22, 2017, <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/o1L7jl-dGxrkeUrKljugGA>.

Fan Miaomiao, Zhong Mei bowuguan hezuozuo minzuzhi tianye diaocha xiaoji #2 [A Brief Note on a Chinese and American Museum Ethnographic Fieldwork Collaboration #2], *Miaomiao gongzuoshi* (Miaomiao Studio) (blog), December 26, 2017, <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/PgATpM6mmq5hMIXofM7KvA>.

Fan Miaomiao, Zhong Mei bowuguan hezuozuo minzuzhi tianye diaocha xiaoji #3 [A Brief Note on a Chinese and American Museum Ethnographic Fieldwork Collaboration #3], *Miaomiao gongzuoshi* (Miaomiao Studio) (blog), December 31, 2017, <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Y-XcQ1YyFctW3A-rSTKkRw>.

Fan Miaomiao, Zhong Mei bowuguan hezuozuo minzuzhi tianye diaocha xiaoji #4 [A Brief Note on a Chinese and American Museum Ethnographic Fieldwork Collaboration #4], *Miaomiao gongzuoshi* (Miaomiao Studio) (blog), January 6, 2018, <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/AFpobZiUmzZ9bFAxVJCaog>.

Fan Miaomiao, Zhong Mei bowuguan hezuozuo minzuzhi tianye diaocha xiaoji #5 [A Brief Note on a Chinese and American Museum Ethnographic Fieldwork Collaboration #5], *Miaomiao gongzuoshi* (Miaomiao Studio) (blog), January 16, 2018, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/v1A83CCAg4RX8B5DxSxEJA>.

Jason Baird Jackson, Fieldwork: Introduction (12/13–18), *Shreds and Patches* (blog), January 27, 2018, <https://jasonbairdjackson.com/2018/01/27/fieldwork-introduction-12-13-18/>.

Jason Baird Jackson, Fieldwork: Highlights from the Basketry and Architecture Group, *Shreds and Patches* (blog), February 13, 2018, <https://jasonbairdjackson.com/2018/02/13/fieldwork-highlights-from-the-basketry-and-architecture-group/>.

Jon Kay, The Mallet: Making a Maul in a Baiku Yao Community, *Shreds and Patches* (blog), April 19, 2018, <https://jasonbairdjackson.com/2018/04/19/the-mallet-making-a-maul-in-a-baiku-yao-community/>.

20. Team members for the Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County research were Dewhurst (MSU Museum), Fan (GXMN), Hertz (Museum of International Folk Art), Jackson (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Lai Shujuan (Sanjiang Museum), Liang (GXMN), Micah Ling (Indiana University), Wang Yahao (University of Leicester), Wu Lianghua (Sanjiang Museum), Yang (Sanjiang Museum and Sanjiang Dong Ecomuseum), Zhang Lijun (GXMN), and Zhang Lun (GXMN).

21. Research team members for the “Survey of Contemporary Bai Craft Practices in the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture” project were Cun Yunji (Dali University), Dewhurst (MSU Museum), Sarah Hatcher (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Jackson (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Hertz (Museum of International Folk Art), Kay (Mathers Museum of World Cultures), Li Taohong (Dali University), Li Xuelong (Dali University), MacDowell (MSU Museum), Wuerxiya (Indiana University), Yin Qun (Dali University), and Zhang Cuixia (Yunnan University).

22. While the Institute for National Culture Research at Dali University hosted the May 2019 research, Zhang Cuixia of Yunnan University also joined the team on the basis of her own research with the Bai people and her involvement in the network of folklore and ethnology scholars engendered by the larger China-US Folklore and Intangible Cultural Heritage Project. For the US participants, travel to Yunnan also provided an opportunity to reconnect in Kunming with key project partner Du Yunhong of the Yunnan Nationalities Museum and to meet new colleagues at Yunnan University.

23. In this article, focus is given to encounters with the Bai, Dong and Yao. During the earlier of the two museum sub-projects, participants also had opportunities to engage with members of other peoples of the region, including the Miao (Hmong), Zhuang, and Buyi. Museum collections related to the Miao and Zhuang were also made by sub-project participants.

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